

## Mikhail Gorbachev's speech in Uzbekistan

Here follows the full text of the speech made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, at a meeting in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan with senior local officials:

I will begin, comrades, by expressing satisfaction with the opportunity of meeting with you and to meet, however briefly, with working people.

This is always necessary, the more so now when profound transformations and changes are taking place in the country. And, naturally, the central committee and government are very interested in having precise information about ongoing processes. In other words, to have its finger on the pulse.

Present here are members of the political bureau of the central committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, members of the government, the presidium of the republic's Supreme Soviet, first secretaries of regional party committees, chairman of executive committees, ministers and other officials.

It can be said that the life of the republic, the organisation of all the work and the working out of prospects for the future depend to a large extent on those gathered here. Your most important duty is to ensure rhythm, a good mood among people, a business-like approach in the whole republic, and to show the people, the working people, the prospects of further development.

When the question arose of a meeting with the President of the Republic of Afghanistan, the general secretary of the central committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Najibullah, it occurred to me and to the comrades in the political bureau that it would be a good idea to hold it in Tashkent.

The situation, and I would like to begin my speech with this, demanded the holding of such a meeting because the process of settlement in Afghanistan has entered the decisive stage. I must say that everything in Geneva has now approached the end, the agreements are basically ready, but difficulties threatening to torpedo the agreements arose at the concluding stage. This required additional intensive efforts.

We studied the existing situation at a meeting of the political bureau taking due account of the complex inter-twinnings and interests, all the implications, and found approaches which, we think, now provide the possibility of concluding this process. And conclude it in such a way that the signing of the agreements by the Afghan and Pakistani sides and the simultaneous signing of certain documents by us and the Americans in the capacity of guarantors could take place in the next few days.

The signing of the Geneva agreements would create more favourable conditions for solving the problems of national reconciliation inside Afghanistan and for a political settlement around it. I think that the agreements will be signed in the next few days.

We understand that the signing of the Geneva agreements will begin a new stage both in the development of events in Afghanistan and simultaneously in Soviet-Afghan relations. We are also aware of the big international significance of entering this new stage.

You have read, probably, or heard on the radio the concluding document — our joint statement. The main conclusions and positions of the Soviet Union and our joint positions with Afghanistan are formulated in it. All this is very important for the present moment. Such work was done and I consider it necessary to inform you about this.

### National tasks

I would also like to inform you that we intend, as was announced on February 8, to start the withdrawal of Soviet troops on May 15 of this year.

And now about our internal matters, about the way perestroika is proceeding, how it is developing in the country, and the new questions that have arisen. Probably I will not be able to avoid making repetitions but maybe here in Uzbekistan this will be taken better since you have the saying that "repetition does not spoil a prayer".

Indeed, much has been said lately in the central committee of the party and by the government about the situation in the country and the course of perestroika. I, too, speak frequently on problems of perestroika, including recently. Yet I would like to express some thoughts and considerations.

First of all I must do this so that afterwards — in the context of the overall situation, national tasks and problems, specifics of the present stage which has made new demands of the entire party, our entire people — I can assess, even if briefly, the situation in Uzbekistan.

When we speak about stages of perestroika we do not want to somehow artificially separate one from the other: like saying, look, the first stage is over, we have turned over the page, fully solved the tasks of the initial period and something different has begun. And now, from such a day, from such a date, the second stage has begun. This, of course, would be an oversimplified approach.

In reality when we speak about the initial stage or second stage we simply want to stress that each of them has its peculiarities which should be taken into account.

What did we begin the process of perestroika with? Frankly speaking, we got the most direct impulse from the actual state of affairs in the economy, in the social sphere, and in the moral-political and spiritual fields. We were concerned by real problems which began to burden the life of society, every family, and every work collective. This is what worried us.

And in order to tackle the accumulated pro-

blems which, so to say, were banging at all our doors and windows, we had to actually see the society in which we live and subject it to an all-round, responsible and principled analysis.

Such an analysis was made and, as I already said, from principled positions. On the basis of a profound and truthful evaluation of the processes, both positive and negative, we obtained a real picture. And this allowed us to draw conclusions both for policy and for practical activity.

It became clear: partial solutions, the adoption of separate practical measures or the conduct of some campaign would not suffice. The situation turned out to be much more serious and profound than it appeared on the surface. The task acquired the contours of a big and long-term one. We arrived at the conclusion that we should start a thorough restructuring of the whole of society.

It was exactly as a result of such work and such a conclusion that there appeared decisions, I would say of a strategic nature, which defined the main directions of fundamental restructuring, encompassing the sphere of policy and the sphere of the economy, the sphere of culture, spiritual life — the entire complex set of social relations at the present stage.

In effect the question arose of the fate of our state, the fate of socialism and the future of our people.

We saw for ourselves that we really have no way out except to undergo a fundamental renewal of society by opening up that potential of socialism inherent in its very nature.

We realised that the party must display courage and will, free itself of existing notions of socialism which bear the imprint of certain conditions, especially the period of the cult of personality, rid itself of old notions of methods of construction and, the main thing, rid itself of everything that, generally speaking, deformed socialism and fettered the people's creative abilities.

This constituted the essence of the initial first stage: meditation, cognition and formulation of policy. But this does not mean at all that we already have all the answers.

No, the party will yet have to carry out a tremendous amount of theoretical, political work, drawing into it all the scientific and intellectual forces of society.

Our efforts in the sphere of theory and policy should not only be stepped up but should expand and reach new horizons with due account for the experience of perestroika already accumulated, because this experience also helps us to take a new glance at many things and correctly assess the past.

In this respect we pin big hopes on the preparation for and holding of the 19th Party Conference. It should give a new impulse to such activity. That is why we should thoroughly continue the party's theoretical and political work in order to understand the present and the past better and, what is most important, to build the future on the basis of the lessons drawn and real knowledge.

Generally it can be said that the main result of the first stage of perestroika is that we got a thoroughly considered, scientifically substan-

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tiated and concrete platform of perestroika.

At the present stage the main thing is to transform policy and decisions — and we have adopted decisions on the biggest directions — into life, into actual deeds.

Everything that was thought out at the first stage must now be translated into reality by way of democracy and openness, radical economic reform, new approaches to social policy, and moral and spiritual revitalisation of society.

Perestroika has acquired big scope. Today it involves and affects all society. It has put into motion the entire mass of people. Yesterday and today I had several meetings. People are becoming different. The most important thing is that they are coming out of a state of social apathy and indifference to what is happening. People are becoming concerned and they are experiencing worry.

And this, comrades, is always accompanied by a sense of responsibility.

Why is this so? Because people today know more about society, about their republic, about their present and past, about what is being planned for the future. And when a person knows all this he begins to join the common process. The more so that we appeal to him, ask him to express his views and thoughts.

### Decisive stage

And it is thus — by way of the processes of democratisation, openness, radical reform, which itself is based on the drawing of people into creative life by way of work teams, contracts, cost-accounting, and so on — by way of revitalising the spiritual atmosphere, it is by way of all this that the minds of people were set in motion and have become more active.

This, perhaps, is so far the most important thing that we have managed to accomplish — to awaken the interest of people in deeds, in perestroika, in the fate of the whole country.

But at the same time this situation has also placed the party itself, all its elements, all our cadres and, indeed, all work collectives in new conditions. We have every reason to say that the decisive stage of struggle for the success of perestroika has begun.

Now when perestroika affects the interests of all society, every collective, every person, discussions about its aims and tasks and its essence have intensified with new force.

It may be that at the first stage the discussions were due more to human curiosity. People wanted to understand what was happening, what the leadership was planning and to put as many questions as possible. But now when every person is affected life as such has become involved. And people are again returning to questions.

But now they are already discussing them more concretely and with a bigger sense of personal involvement. They want to get a thorough understanding of everything that perestroika offers a person and what it demands of him and the whole of society.

You see what discussions are taking place in society, what passions are flaring. Every person wants to understand what is taking place, find his place, speak out, make his contribution or to object to something. This, too, is unusual.

In the past somebody with a differing view would keep quiet. And this, let's say this frankly, suited many. It was said: the meeting went well — not a single question was asked and there wasn't a single deviation. And that in conditions when there were so many problems in society, in the country. A meeting was considered to have gone 'well' and in an orderly manner when not a single question was raised.

I would say that we must simultaneously solve two tasks, not even two but one task that has two aspects. First of all we must advance perestroika by solving practical questions in all directions and at the same time learn democracy, political culture, cost-accounting and new methods of economic management. We must

master new methods in the activity of party bodies and the soviets.

And here we must act in such a way that perestroika can already yield real fruits and changes for the better in the living and working conditions of Soviet people.

You probably have discerned this approach in the activity of the central committee. Perestroika, no doubt, will take a rather lengthy period of time. But there are questions which, I would say, are crying out, are demanding attention and solution today.

In this connection we studied the state of the public health system and education, something that concerns virtually every family, all people, and tackled them at the first turn.

For the public health system alone we allocated more than six billion roubles. We found money to strengthen the material and technical base of the public health system, to improve the supply of medicines, increase the material interest of doctors and other medical personnel.

Or take the reform of our educational system — from schools to establishments of higher learning.

We see that we must solve many questions connected with the food problem. Here we have introduced serious incentives in order to raise vigour and performance in the agrarian sector.

Or take the commodities that do not satisfy us today because of our present-day requirements and present-day standards.

Or housing. We have added here too in order to solve this problem as well.

We switched ten percent of capital investment from industrial to housing construction. We have lifted restrictions on the building of houses by individuals. Recently we studied questions of expanding the scale of the building of housing by co-operatives. We adopted a major decision on developing the base of the building materials industry.

### Reshaping

This is what we are doing: by singling out strategic problems which require time, we also want to solve more swiftly many questions which already today improve the life of people.

Comrades, perestroika begins its count from the April plenary meeting. And it will be three years in a few days from now. And those years have demonstrated that the most difficult thing after all is the reshaping of mentality.

All this, comrades, is gained with difficulty. This applies to openness and democracy, to cost-accounting and new methods of economic management, in particular the various forms of the contract method, and to processes in the sphere of culture. And do we not see how many demands life has made of the party itself, party bodies, party cadres, the soviets and public organisations?

It is not by chance, for instance, that despite the existence of a huge network of public organisations, which encompass the main sections of the population, informal associations and organisations suddenly began to appear. Why? Because people are not satisfied with the activity, atmosphere and methods of existing organisations.

The appearance of informal organisations is connected exactly with this.

I must also say the following: The scope, the novelty of problems along all the directions of the new stage of perestroika have, frankly speaking, simply frightened some people. Quite a few simply lost their bearings. A certain confusion has originated in minds. Somebody screamed for help. But it is a short distance from this to sounding a retreat for perestroika.

This situation and the understanding of the exceptional importance of the present moment in the development of perestroika brought the central committee to the conclusion that the ideological backing of perestroika is now acquiring top priority.

That is why this question was raised so sharply at the February plenary meeting of the central committee. We also returned to it at the All-Union Congress of collective farmers. And only recently it was elucidated in an article in the April 5 issue of *Pravda*.

I would like to convey to you, comrades, the understanding that perestroika, like any revolution, requires a resolute, revolutionary change of consciousness and mentality. Without this it is impossible to accomplish cardinal transformations either in the basis or in the political superstructure.

We are looking for answers to questions set by life itself and are finding them, not beyond the framework of our social and political system, but on the road of bringing out the potential of socialism.

The need for cardinal socialist transformations has long been felt in the party. Repeated attempts were made in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. We all remember this, the comrades sitting here remember this, perhaps with the exception of those who are still very young.

At first such attempts produced genuine and substantial results. Take the September plenary meeting of 1953. What an impulse it gave at the time to the development of agriculture. But already starting with 1958 the situation began to change.

### Decisive importance

Take the March plenary meeting of 1965. It was, in effect, a new concept of how to manage society, how to approach the economy not only of agriculture but how to approach the economy as such.

The scientific approach was employed as the main one. Incidentally, that was the eighth five-year-plan period and look what substantial increments in agriculture, and not only in agriculture, characterise it.

So there have been attempts, real and serious attempts, but often they turned out to be truncated, not broad enough, encompassing only some part of the problems without linkage, without account for the entire interconnection of one problem with other problems.

Inconsistency in implementing even those decisions that were adopted also made itself felt. Many attempts to carry out cardinal transformations were doomed to failure because they were not backed up by a development and expansion of democracy.

Everything was solved in studies while the people were not seriously drawn into participation either at the preparation stage of decisions or especially at implementation stage.

This was happening because both the party and the cadre corps in the country were on the whole under the influence of old perceptions and professed the command-administrative methods of leadership which opposed democracy.

There was no understanding of the tremendous, decisive importance of democracy for the development of socialism and without which socialism simply cannot develop.

Why do I tell you this, comrades? This has turned out to be one of the main points today over which passions and debates have flared up in the country.

The command-and-administer system and those worshipping it are not surrendering ground without a battle.

The process of democratisation is making progress. And it is, of course, a blow to command methods. Through glasnost, democracy, cost-accounting, the contract system, and the councils of brigades and worker collectives, people are beginning to join in the common effort.

This is not to everyone's liking; this does not suit everyone. There remains a nostalgia for the past — for commanding. There are a great many people who view their particular factory, village, collective farm, district or city as their own fiefdom.



This is why not only debates are under way. A real struggle in real life, in party and local government organisations, in worker collectives and in all sections of society, has erupted over this central issue.

I'll tell you this: what is happening in precisely this sphere of our perestroika is remarkable. It is remarkable because people are gaining in strength. People have raised their heads, come to realise their rights and have a high educational potential gained over the years of Soviet government. And they are beginning to consciously share in all the processes taking place in society.

Without bringing out the potential of socialist democracy, comrades, we shall not be able to unfold the potential of socialism either, we shall not be able to make our perestroika irreversible, shall not achieve its goals and shall not make certain that Lenin's ideals of socialism will become a reality for the people.

Why am I laying emphasis on this point? It is the principal one, comrades. And taking into account the audience in this hall, this subject is all the more appropriate to be discussed in straightforward, honest party language. Disapproving voices can be heard, saying: 'this is what your democracy has led to', 'this is what your perestroika has brought you'.

We should see clearly what is actually behind these voices. It is disrespect for the people that is behind them. I think that is the main thing. The disbelief in their wisdom, their patriotism, their common sense and abilities, the disbelief in their sense of responsibility and their fidelity to socialism.

## High standard

Life has demonstrated the utter inefficiency of command-and-administer methods, their incompatibility with the nature of the current tasks and, last but not least, how out of date and inconsistent with the cultural standards and political awareness of the Soviet people they are.

This is, comrades, the kernel of the matter today. Speaking about this, I remember the collective farmers' congress. Some of you must have attended it as well.

We in the political bureau were most gratified with the high standard of the congress: the standard of the discussion there, the diversity of the problems raised, the profound concern for the nation, and the awareness of responsibility for resolving the food problem. That is, in short, with the farmers' statesmanlike approach to their tasks.

It is from these positions that delegates have demanded categorically that all impediments in the way of initiative in agriculture be removed and scope for creativity, independence and enterprise be opened. Practically 100 percent of the speakers demanded and requested that the collective farms should no longer be ordered about.

Nonetheless, even today many remain deaf to that and keep in the rut, pulling the cart along the beaten track. That's where we've ended up, comrades. That's where we've allowed things to drift to.

I have had several brief meetings with working people over these days in Uzbekistan. What has been the strongest impression? The people's activeness, their openness and desire to discuss the most serious matters.

The collective farmers' congress and these meetings have presented our people in a totally different light. The people have become different. We should, comrades, think this over most carefully and understand this. For this prompts very serious, most serious conclusions.

Our people have things to say and have the energy to contribute to the struggle for perestroika. But they can only do this and realise their potential amid democratism, amid broad democratism.

Our cadres should persistently master methods of work amid unfolding democracy. This is a most difficult science. At the central committee

we have felt it as well, when examining major issues of national importance and conflict situations in our society.

The experience of our three years of work after the April (1985) central committee plenum has led me, just like my comrades in the political bureau, to one conclusion, namely that it is only through democracy, through a democratic process and broad, the broadest possible contact with the people, that it is possible to find the right, all-round, weighed solutions to any problems in society.

It is only in this way that the people can be enlisted in the active struggle to reach the objectives of perestroika. Let us firmly agree to decisively get away from whatever is left of administration by decree and orders and from a disrespectful attitude to people, their needs and requirements, their opinions and judgements. Let me assure you: they will respond with ever greater social and political activity.

## Words and deeds

One more thing, comrades. In the past we attempted to tackle major issues, but we did not carry our efforts through to the end, did not fulfil what had been outlined. We have paid for this, let us say it bluntly, with serious setbacks in coping with plans for the nation's social and economic development. This has told strongly on popular well-being and on the entire progress of our society.

Conclusions seem to have been drawn from this, but obviously not by everyone and not everywhere. Looking at the past two years which opened the current five-year period, we can again see a gap between words and deeds.

The old illness keeps a firm grip and has become chronic. Not infrequently, good decisions, even those taken now, at the time of perestroika, are carried out only partially.

This means that past mistakes are repeated. In a measure, this can be explained by the fact that the old methods of work still have a strong hold and that worker collectives and executive personnel have not yet really adapted to the new conditions. The new economic management mechanisms have not yet been started up everywhere either.

This is all true. And still, comrades, we could have achieved more, much more than we have.

I urge you to make a serious, party-style analysis of the state of affairs in Uzbekistan.

Why am I talking about this now? First of all because economic growth rates in this republic have declined over recent years. Ponder the situation. It means that the working people of the republic have received far from everything that they, and the country in general for that matter, could have received. Hence the imbalances and the disrupted general rhythm.

All our republics are closely interconnected. In point of fact, they cannot live without one another. They form a single complex, a single national organism. And wherever something is wrong, it tells on the condition of the entire organism. Everything is interrelated in our state.

I draw your attention to the fact that you have not been coping with plans in industry, construction and especially in agriculture.

You have home-building shortfalls every year, this despite the very acute housing problem in this republic. Prefabricated home-building facilities here are operating at only 68 percent of capacity and factories making bricks, cement and other construction materials are being expanded and modernised too slowly. How can one understand all this?

Or take another example, which is perhaps the most important performance indicator for this republic. I mean the use of irrigated lands. Comrade Nishanov was perfectly right in raising this issue and I support him. This is the republic's golden stock. It is not enough to say that all crop yields do not correspond to the potentialities of irrigated farming. The harvests have lately even

begun to decrease. This is a trend which should worry all of us very much.

Uzbekistan is the supplier of many crops that cannot be grown elsewhere. And they are needed by the country. This is a real calamity, comrades. Without irrigated lands used properly and efficiently, a normal life in this republic is not possible. That practically half of the irrigated lands need serious improvement, especially because of salinisation, won't do at all.

Another point. There is a lack of child care centres both in town and country. And the extension of the network is clearly not fast enough.

Women in a new housing development on the outskirts of Tashkent yesterday surrounded me and the first thing they told me was: 'Mikhail Sergeevich, we don't know what to do about our children. There is simply nowhere we can leave them under care we have to go to work.'

It should be ensured that no factory, no collective farm or state farm, and no building organisation remains outside efforts to deal with this important problem. The whole republic should be roused to tackle the problem of kindergartens. It is a matter directly bearing on people. It is, in your conditions, an urgent priority.

One more thing. That the potential created in this republic has not been bringing adequate returns is another lapse in your work. Large investments have been made in Uzbekistan's agriculture. And look: while the ratio of funds per farm increased by 4.1 times between 1970 and 1986, gross output only grew by 50 percent. Labour productivity remained at the previous level. Agricultural production in the republic has not made gains since the early '80s. All these are very disturbing trends.

## Modernisation

It is necessary to make a serious analysis, adopt far-reaching measures and mobilise the republic's working people. Uzbekistan is rich in natural and manpower resources and has large material stocks and fleets of machinery.

I would like our discussion today to be remembered by everyone and make everyone think very hard. Real ways have to be found to get Uzbekistan's economy out of the difficult situation.

What would I like to advise you in this connection? If what I'll tell you now is acceptable, think about it. Don't be carried away by building further and major enterprises. What is needed is modernisation. And by updating production assets, bring out the potential of major enterprises. In order to put natural and especially manpower resources to use more quickly, however, the path of setting up medium-sized and small enterprises and factories' branches ought to be taken.

It is, no doubt, essential to make wider use of the possibilities offered by radical economic reform and the conversion to cost-accounting and new economic management methods. Where these have already been mastered, the payoff is quite different.

They are changing attitudes to work and this is yielding better end results.

You can do much by widely developing the food and consumer goods industries. It is, in my opinion, simply your "gold mine". I think that in the near future Uzbekistan should reach a level enabling it to meet both its own requirements and the requirements of other republics.

Co-operatives and efforts to develop the service sector hold out much promise. You should, comrades, think this all over in a businesslike spirit and begin to identify all your possibilities, big and small.

I have the impression that the mood in the republic now is such that if the people are offered a good programme, they can accomplish a lot and speed up social and economic development. This is, comrades, the paramount task for all leading personnel in the republican party organisation.



Since we are talking from the standpoint of perestroika and the contribution of each to its implementation, I would like to say also this: We live in a multinational country. And now that we are effecting through-going changes throughout society, we should always take account of their implications for our union as a whole and for each republic, and for interethnic relations.

The resolution of any social and economic problem and any problem of culture, democratisation and glasnost invariably affects the interests of every people, every ethnic group in one way or another. This is why these problems must be resolved in a way that does not damage their mutual understanding and co-operation.

On the contrary, it is necessary to make sure that the friendship of our peoples grows stronger. It is one of the greatest gains of the October Revolution and socialism. This is one side of the problem, a very important one.

## Society is developing

The other is that in the real life of the past few years, notwithstanding all the prodigious achievements of the Leninist policy of nationalities and notwithstanding the truly unique experience we have gained over the 70 years since the October Revolution, we have encountered quite a few serious problems that require careful study, balanced assessments, well-considered conclusions, and timely and correct decisions.

I have already had occasion to talk on the subject. We should get rid of dogmatic, I would say schematic, attitudes in this field as well. We cannot limit ourselves to just listing our achievements.

Our society is developing. Its social and economic progress, naturally, is being accompanied by the growth of the national awareness of every people and its intellectual potential and by the spiritual enrichment of every ethnic group.

All this, naturally, engenders new problems which have to be seen and resolved on the basis of a calm and thorough analysis and objective judgments.

We should also take into account the fact that ever new generations are coming into life and that experience of internationalism is not passed on automatically.

Every generation has to go through its own school of internationalism and learn to value our interethnic brotherhood and everything that has been done to strengthen it by the preceding generations. And most importantly, it has to make a contribution of its own to strengthening the friendship and co-operation of peoples and bringing them closer together.

In any dispute, in any debate on this issue, comrades, we can make out our case. At the same time we should be prepared to seriously and responsibly discuss pressing problems that should be solved and that can be solved within the framework of our democracy and on the basis of the principles of respect, equality and fraternity.

The scope of the tasks and the amount of the work has put the party in new conditions.

The attainment of our aims depends today to a greater degree than ever before on how successfully the CPSU will perform the role of political vanguard of society.

The fate of perestroika hinges decisively on how the CPSU, the party central committee, the central committees of the communist parties of the constituent republics, every party committee, every party organisation and every communist, acts.

Perestroika in the country is a great revolutionary effort. The party keeps the main aspects of this far-reaching process of renewal within its focus of attention all the time. We have been able to do much over this short period. It is of fundamental importance that the party leads the perestroika drive.

But this does not at all mean that the party is free from problems, oversights and tardiness in comprehending new phenomena and also in practical work, especially in the fulfilment of adopted decisions.

The CPSU is the generator of the ideas of perestroika and the policy of renewal, and the organiser of their realisation in society.

Naturally, this makes great demands on the party as regards theoretical research, the mastering of new methods of organising the masses, and work with personnel.

## Imaginatively

But the main thing is that the party should not lag behind the processes of perestroika now gathering momentum in the country. The lessons of the last three years teach us that whenever the party falls behind in any area, it tells on the situation throughout society, on popular sentiments, on the pace and scale of changes, and on the shaping of public opinion in the spirit of perestroika.

The party can cope with the new tasks if it persistently masters the political methods of guidance and fully overcomes conservatism and inert thinking. Once we say that society should be freed from it and delivered from bureaucratic perversities, it is first of all the party that should set the example. In this work, this immense effort, crucial to the fate of perestroika.

We should renounce the methods of administration by injunction and orders to personnel and work collectives, and stop substituting for state, local government and economic agencies.

If the party acts imaginatively, innovatively and responsibly, working all the time in the midst of the masses, our cause will be warranted and perestroika, and consequently the whole of society, will make further progress.

It is perhaps appropriate here, at our meeting, to repeat what I have already had occasion to say before. The party has undoubtedly performed great services to the people and to history. It enjoys respect and prestige among the working people. But it should live up to its reputation all the time through vigorous political activity. The party's prestige is not something given once and for all. It should be reaffirmed by stubborn and responsible work every day.

One more thing. I would like to remind you, even at the expense of repeating myself, that the party is at the service of the people. He who forgets this does not deserve the title of party member, let alone the honour of being at the head of a work collective, a district or a region.

It is good that the activity of communists is on the increase everywhere. There is ever greater emphasis on principle in their work and they are

coming to develop an ever stronger sense of responsibility for the fate of the country and of their collectives. This has also been demonstrated by the past accounts from the party committees on the progress of perestroika.

Communists are expecting higher standards from their elected bodies, party leaders and comrades. We should support active communists in every way and seek to stimulate healthy trends in party affairs. It is very important to extend further intraparty democracy, increase the role of elected bodies, and drastically improve the performance of the party apparatus.

The spirit of comradeship should be strengthened in the party at every level. All should feel equal. We should not tolerate any elements of the cult of a leader in the ranks of the CPSU. Reigning in the party should be the spirit of party-style comradeship.

The elected party bodies should lead a full-blooded life rather than be in the position of suppliers of services for the party apparatus.

## Focus of attention

Things sometimes go so far that members of the apparatus begin ordering members of district, city and regional party committees about. Everybody must be reminded that the apparatus should serve the particular elected body and fulfil its decisions, and not vice versa.

All the problems, the entire range of issues concerning the activities of the CPSU in the conditions of perestroika will be in the focus of attention at the 19th National Party Conference.

But party organisations should not wait and see what the party conference has to say. Much has already been said. What is needed is action, not waiting. It is necessary to actively participate in the elaboration of ideas whose realisation would enrich all party life. And every party organisation in the specific conditions of its work should make a contribution of its own to accomplishing the challenging tasks of perestroika.

Let me repeat, do not wait for instructions from above. The goals and the tasks have been set. The policy has been worked out. The guidelines of perestroika are clear. It is necessary to act, comrades.

I think that the party organisation of Uzbekistan, which has grown stronger as a result of self-recovery and cleansing, has every opportunity to lead the masses and perform the role of political vanguard of the republic's working people in their efforts for the further flourishing of Uzbekistan and for increasing its contribution to accomplishing tasks of countrywide importance.

(Tashkent. April 9.)

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# Joint Soviet-Afghan Statement

*A meeting held in Tashkent on April 7 between Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Najibullah, President of the Republic of Afghanistan and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, opened a new stage in Soviet-Afghan relations. The meeting passed in a friendly and warm atmosphere.*

*The following joint statement was adopted as a result of the meetings:*

A meeting between the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev and the President of the Republic of Afghanistan and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan Najibullah was held in Tashkent on April 7, 1988. Taking part in it were:

Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Eduard Shevardnadze and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan Rafik Nishanov.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Najibullah exchanged views on the key moments of the international situation and studied in detail topical questions directly concerning the interests of their countries.

They noted that the policy of national reconciliation consistently pursued by the Afghan leadership, its constructive position on questions of the political settlement is the only correct line that accords with the interests of the Afghan people, all of its neighbours and the interests of the entire international community.

The sides confirmed loyalty to the old tradition of building relations between the USSR and Afghanistan on principles of equality, mutual respect, mutual advantage and non-interference in internal affairs.

As a result of the meeting Mikhail Gorbachev and Najibullah arrived at a common view on the following.

**First.** The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan will act in accordance with the statements published on February 8, 1988. These

statements imparted a new impulse to the process of the political settlement of the most complex regional conflict and made it possible to place negotiations on the plane of a practical solution.

**Second.** The General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the President of Afghanistan believe that the last obstacles to concluding the agreements have now been removed thanks to constructive co-operation of all who are involved in the settlement, and favour their immediate signing.

Both sides duly assess the role of the UN Secretary-General and his personal representative Diego Cordovez.

The Afghan President welcomes the readiness of the Soviet Union and the United States to act as guarantors of the Geneva accords.

**Third.** The Soviet Union and Afghanistan reaffirm that in the event of the conclusion within the shortest period of the said agreements, the Afghanistan-USSR understanding that the Soviet troops will be withdrawn within the period fixed by these agreements, starting from May 15, 1988, will remain in force.

**Fourth.** The policy of national reconciliation makes it possible to settle the situation around Afghanistan, end the war and fratricide, establish peace throughout the country's territory and form a coalition government with the participation of all forces representing the Afghan society, including those who are currently opposed to one another.

**Fifth.** The final status of their country among other states will be determined by the Afghans themselves and nobody but them. The Soviet Union reaffirms its support for President Najibullah's statement on Afghanistan as an independent, non-aligned and neutral state. It proceeds from the premise that the territory of

that country or any of its part will never be used for purposes hostile to its neighbours with regard to which Afghanistan will contribute a policy of good-neighbourly relations and co-operation. This equally applies to the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Soviet side backs the Afghan President's statement to the effect that Afghanistan's internal structure will rest on a multi-party system in the political field and on a multi-sectoral basis in the economic sphere.

**Sixth.** It is of key importance for implementing the policy of national reconciliation to create satisfactory conditions for the return of Afghan refugees who are temporarily in the territory of Pakistan and other countries and grant them rights on an equal basis with all citizens of the country. The Soviet Union will extend assistance to Afghanistan in creating such conditions.

**Seventh.** The Soviet Union, relying on relations of traditional and historical friendship, expresses the readiness to co-operate with Afghanistan at high level in order to restore the economy and facilitate the economic and social development of the Republic of Afghanistan.

**Eighth.** The General Secretary and the President call on other states to contribute to establishing peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan and respect the Geneva Accords. This would set a good and encouraging example for resolving other regional conflicts.

Mikhail Gorbachev gave a luncheon in honour of Najibullah, which was held in a friendly, comradely atmosphere. □

## Mikhail Gorbachev meets Zbigniew Messner

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, in his meeting on April 6 with Zbigniew Messner, Member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and Chairman of Poland's Council of Ministers, stressed the importance of Soviet-Polish co-operation as a major factor of European politics.

The Warsaw Treaty member countries had already achieved much in their persistent striving to abate military confrontation in Europe, Gorbachev said.

It was satisfying to see that the concept of

building a common European home was gaining greater recognition with broad sections of public opinion and political circles, he said.

But there were also people who saw only a distorted picture of Europe, unable to discard illusions about the possibility of recarving the post-war map and rolling socialism back.

Preserving and strengthening peace in Europe and promoting co-operation for the benefit of all peoples called for unconditional respect for the existing political realities here, Gorbachev pointed out.

In discussing questions of economic co-operation between the USSR and Poland, the sides noted that the large-scale transformation taking place in the two economies had much in common and paved the way for supplementing traditional exchange of goods with modern forms of co-operation in the field of production, science and technology. But these opportunities were used so far insufficiently.

Messner described the course of the second stage of Poland's economic reform.

Describing the course of perestroika, or restructuring, in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev emphasised that it was now spreading to all spheres of life of Soviet society.

The ideas of revolutionary renewal were encountering ever growing popular support.

The lack of experience and the ability to

work in a new way, and conservative and leftist sentiments were making themselves felt.

All that put forward the task of ideological support for perestroika. The CPSU was now concentrating its attention on preparations for the 19th Party Conference which will evaluate the results of perestroika half way between the two congresses, and, which is of special importance, define a package of specific measures to democratise the life of the Party and Soviet society.

The two sides discussed the question of Gorbachev's forthcoming visit to Poland. They stressed the need to analyse jointly the present state of all areas of Soviet-Polish co-operation and sum up the first results of the implementation of the declaration on ideological co-operation signed in Moscow in April 1987. □

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# Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Yasser Arafat

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV had a meeting in the Kremlin on April 9 with Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The interlocutors were unanimous that more favourable conditions has been forming lately for a settlement of the Middle East crisis.

The prospects of overcoming the crisis were studied from broad positions of the present world development. "The deeper the new thinking will enter the consciousness of the world public, political life, the quicker a new political situation will form in the world in which it will be easier to solve conflict, including regional problems," Mikhail Gorbachev said.

He said that given a profound dialectical understanding of the essence of the new thinking there is no contradiction between a policy based on it and the interests of every people, including those struggling for their independence, for an independent choice of national development. On the contrary, such a policy expands the possibilities of approaching in a new way the most complicated problems which have defied solution for years and decades. In an atmosphere in which prospects of ridding mankind of the nuclear danger are taking shape it is the more intolerable that there remain trouble spots, bleeding wounds, which it is simpler to cure.

Yasser Arafat stressed that the Soviet Union's course in the world arena pursued in the spirit of new thinking facilitates the solution of the main international problems and improves conditions for settling regional conflicts as well.

On behalf of the Soviet people Mikhail Gorbachev expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people's selfless struggle. The Palestinians are a people with a difficult destiny. But it is not alone in upholding their just cause. The Palestinian people has extensive international support and this is the earnest of the solution of the main question for the Palestinian people — the question of self-determination. Just as recognition of the state of Israel and account for its security interests, the solution of this question is a necessary element of the establishment of peace and goodneighbourliness in the region on the basis of principles of

international law.

The upsurge of the Palestinian popular movement has now become a key impulse for searching for practical solutions leading to an all-embracing settlement. The potential of this mass upsurge is in its profoundly democratic nature and ability to stay away from the road of extremism despite the provocative and cruel repressions by the occupiers. This gains for the movement ever greater international support and sympathy in most diverse circles, Mikhail Gorbachev said.

The search for a solution of the Middle East problem should be based on negotiations, on an equal and business-like dialogue and not on armed force and the desire to dictate, he went on.

The Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev said, persistently works for a just and all-embracing settlement with due account for the interests of all — both Arabs, including Palestinians, and Israel. It is prepared to interact constructively with all the participants in the peace process.

The Soviet view of the essence of the settlement, he said, is the following.

The withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories occupied in 1967 — the west bank of the Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights — is the key precondition of a settlement.

The Palestinian people has the right to self-determination in the same measure as it is ensured for the people of Israel. How will the Palestinians exercise this right is exclusively their own business.

An international conference under the aegis of the United Nations Organisation is the most effective mechanism of a settlement. Recognition by all its participants of resolutions 242 and 338 of the United Nations Security Council and the lawful rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, should become the legal basis of the conference.

The conference should be attended by representatives of all the sides drawn into the conflict, including the Arab people of Palestine, and also the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The conference presupposes most diverse forms of interaction of its participants. As to the

role of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, it will be to create a constructive atmosphere for the conduct of talks at the conference. For this purpose, in particular, they can collectively or individually table proposals and recommendations.

The invitations to all participants in the conference are to be sent by the United Nations Secretary-General.

Mikhail Gorbachev showed an understanding attitude to the idea of a single Arab delegation at the international conference.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Yasser Arafat exchanged views on various constructive ideas which could facilitate the preparation of the conference, its convocation and fruitful work.

The Soviet Union is not against intermediate measures and stages on the road to an all-embracing settlement. But they should be considered and carried out within the framework of the conference and in linkage with its end aims.

Success depends in many ways on the great powers, first of all the USSR and the United States. The Soviet approach provides for a combination of adherence to principle and realism, account for the viewpoints and interests of all sides related to the conflict. The point is to achieve a balance of interests.

One of the components of the normalisation of the situation in the Middle East must be the ending of the arms race there, the more so that it is acquiring a new nature in connection with the appearance of means of mass destruction and rockets with an enhanced range in the possession of the conflicting and warring sides.

Mikhail Gorbachev noted the importance of inter-Arab accord on the main questions of the Middle East settlement. The development of Syrian-Palestinian mutual understanding is acquiring special importance.

Yasser Arafat stated that the Palestinian people has always thought highly of the Soviet Union's invariable support for its inalienable national rights and of the Soviet efforts towards an all-embracing Middle East settlement.

The meeting passed in a business-like and constructive atmosphere characteristic of the long-established friendly relations between the CPSU and the PLO. □

## Shevardnadze Arafat meeting

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR had a meeting on April 9 with Yasser Arafat Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, who was in Moscow on a working visit.

During the conversation, which passed in a friendly atmosphere, the interlocutors noted the common approach of the Soviet and PLO leadership to the cardinal tasks of present-day politics — the advancement of the process of disarmament and the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free and non-violent world.

Yasser Arafat spoke highly of the Soviet Union's efforts to improve the situation in the world and create a climate of trust and stability in international relations. The Soviet-American INF Treaty is of historic importance and evidence of the viability of the new political thinking which should be applied also to the solution of other international, including regional problems, the

distinguished Palestinian guest stressed.

The main attention during the conversation was devoted to questions of the speediest attainment of an all-embracing settlement of the Middle East conflict, the oldest and most explosive one in the chain of regional conflicts.

Both sides resolutely condemned Tel Aviv's repressions and terror against the peaceful population of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel.

We in the Soviet Union greatly admire the courage of the Palestinians, their unbending determination to achieve national liberation, Eduard Shevardnadze said. Soviet people solidarise with the Palestinian people's struggle for the implementation of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination.

The sides stressed that the popular uprising in the occupied territories has created a qualitatively new situation in terms of achieving a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The former situation cannot continue any longer. The problem of the Middle East settlement, and its central question, the Palestinian question, must

be solved, and solved without delay. For this it is necessary to bring about an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands and give the Palestinians a possibility to freely shape their destiny and choose the form of their state arrangement. This is a demand of the times.

Both sides are convinced that an international conference is a generally recognised forum which would open up real possibilities for finding mutually acceptable decisions on all aspects of the settlement. Representatives of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, all sides drawn into the conflict, including the Arab people of Palestine whose lawful representative is the PLO, should take part in the preparation and work of the conference.

The sides were unanimous that it is necessary to further intensify efforts to prepare and convene a Middle East conference. The main thing now is to activate the mechanism of the conference, to start practical talks within its framework. Both the Soviet and the Palestinian sides are ready for this.



## Pravda on perestroika and its opponents

THE newspaper *Pravda*, carries in its April 5 edition a big editorial article headlined *The Principles of Perestroika: Revolutionary Thinking and Actions*. It contains a critical analysis of the stands of those who see in perestroika a "threat to socialism".

The April (1985) plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, *Pravda* says, "ushered in a new stage in socialist development aimed at a qualitative renovation of Soviet society, at perestroika". Over the past three years, "the concept, strategy and tactics of perestroika have been elaborated and its revolutionary principles have been explicitly determined: more democracy, more socialism. Today perestroika is social practice."

Noting that perestroika increasingly grips the minds of the masses as a way of thinking and acting, *Pravda* notes that the decisive factor today is the realisation that there can be no return to the past. Hence the main discussions "are around the question of how to clear socialism from accretion and deformations, how to get rid of what was fettering in society and prevented the realisation of the potential of socialism in full measure."

At the same time the newspaper draws attention to the fact that the questions have again become topical whether it is possible to do without a breaking-up of the old ways, without radical measures, and confine ourselves only to the perfection of what was created earlier? Whether Soviet society was going to lose in the process of perestroika, to destroy many of the things which have been created over the seven decades since the Great October Revolution.

All that is normal and natural, the article says. Also natural is the discussion in society on all issues of the country's life. Its salutary impact on social development is getting ever more noticeable. *Pravda* recalls in that connection that the new Party tasks in restructuring all fields of life at the current stage were specified by the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, which was held in February this year. In a speech addressed to it, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, made an explicit analysis of today's problems, set forth the programme for the ideological substantiation of perestroika.

"The fight for perestroika is being carried out both in the production and in the cultural fields. Albeit that fight does not assume the form of class antagonisms, it is an acute one," the newspaper notes. The very discussions, their character and trend are evidence of a democratisation of the Soviet society. Yet "one cannot help seeing in them a quite specific tendency. Time and again it declares itself not by the wish to comprehend what is going on, to analyse things, not by the wish to ensure progress, but, on the contrary, to impede it by shouting the customary incantations: "they are betraying the ideals", "forgoing the principles", "undermining the fundamentals", *Pravda* says.

*Pravda* describes as a reverberation of such sentiments the article "I Cannot Forgo the Principles", which was published in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on March 13 this year. Characterising this publication as an "ideological platform, a manifesto of the anti-perestroika forces," the newspaper says that two main propositions permeate the whole lengthy publication, as a matter of fact: why all of that perestroika, and haven't we gone too far on issues of democratisation and glasnost?

Apparently, the newspaper says, "not all realise fully that the administrative-command methods have exhausted themselves. All who pin their hopes on those methods or their modifications, would do well to wake up to

the fact we have had that and more than once, but that did not bring about the desired results."

But how one should "save" socialism today, *Pravda* inquires in its editorial article. Should we preserve the authoritarian methods, the practices of thoughtless execution of orders and of suppression of the initiative? Or should we return to Lenin's principles, whose substance is democracy, social justice, economic cost accounting, respect for the honour, life and dignity of the individual? "The first way is practically shared by the publication in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, the second way is dictated by life, which has necessitated perestroika," *Pravda* says.

The newspaper draws attention to the fact that it is "precisely our ideological opponents who are banking on identifying the essence of socialism with old thinking, with the authoritarian methods, departure from the principles of socialism. Isn't it obvious that here too the stands of the home-bred 'mourners for socialism' are close to the stands of its foreign antagonists? Aren't we liberating the best, creative forces for the fight for socialism, for our values and our ideals by clearing the values, ideals and principles of socialism of the corrosion of bureaucratism, of all that is inhuman."

Touching then upon the problems of Soviet history, *Pravda* notes that recent years have been striking evidence of the growing interest in the past from the broadest sections of the population. "If today we are critically looking into history, it is only because we wish to have a better and fuller idea of the ways into the future," the newspaper stresses. The historical truth "has proved to be bitter in many respects." "Hushing up the painful issues of our history is tantamount to neglecting the truth, displaying a disrespectful attitude to the memory of those who were innocent victims of lawlessness and of arbitrary rule," the newspaper goes on.

In that connection *Pravda* analyses various evaluations of Stalin's role in Soviet history. It points out that Stalin's personality was extremely contradictory. "Remaining on the positions of historical truth, we must see both Stalin's indisputable contribution to the fight for socialism, the defence of its gains and the crude political blunders, the arbitrary rule perpetrated by him and his entourage, for which our people paid a dear price and which had grave consequences for our society's life."

Criticising those who are now trying to whitewash Stalin, the newspaper notes that they "are thus upholding also the preservation in our life and practices today the methods developed by him for the 'resolution' of disputable issues, the public and state structures, norms of Party and social life created by him. The worst thing is that they are upholding the right to arbitrary rule."

We have to return over and over again to the question of Stalin's personality also because a replacement of notions is taking place, the newspaper notes: it is claimed that if Stalin is responsible for crimes, what shall be done with the appraisal of our achievements in the past? Don't we this way deny the heroism of the people who led the country to history-making achievements? "No, we are not denying, but even more glorifying it," *Pravda* says in answer to that question. An honest worker, a soldier on the battlefield, any Soviet citizen, who proved their patriotism in action, their fidelity to the homeland, to socialism, were doing and did! their duty. It is their labour effort, their selflessness and heroism which enabled our country to reach unprecedented heights. And only an immoral person can call in question the labour effort and the heroic feats of the people. But today we realise better than ever before how difficult

it was to do a real thing in those times, which were difficult in all respects."

"It is not right to rate these people as advocates of Stalin's lawlessness. It is not right also because we realise, must realise how much greater the effect of their efforts would have been for the whole of the country, for each of us, if their creative abilities, the material effectiveness had not been weakened objectively by anti-Leninist, anti-socialist practices."

"Yet some people fail to get rid of the nostalgia for the past, when some people said things and others were supposed to heed and uncomplainingly fulfil the orders. One can understand the nostalgia of some people for the past, but it is not worthwhile for a newspaper to propagandise such sentiments without giving them a proper appraisal, and instead giving the reader the impression that they are offered some 'new' political platform."

Noting that perestroika is gathering momentum, *Pravda* said further: "we have got down in real earnest to tackling the overriding, vital problems — those of providing people with housing, food, goods and services. A turn has begun to accelerated progress in the social sphere. Practical measures have been adopted to overhaul education and medical services. Radical economic reform — our main lever for thorough-going change — is taking effect."

In the cultural sphere "the voice of intellectuals and all working people has begun to ring out forceful and clear. It is one of the first accomplishments of perestroika. Democratism is impossible without the freedom of thought and speech, without an open and broad clash of opinions, without a critical review of our affairs." Doing justice to the big contribution made to perestroika by intellectuals, in particular writers, the paper pointed at the same time to "the lack in individual books of a feeling of emotional kinship with one's own people, its history and its joy and pain".

"Quite a few attempts hurriedly to make oneself known, create a stir and play around with 'facts' — not for the sake of truth, but for the sake of one's own unsated vanity", the article continued, "result in facts being twisted and distorted and, last but not least, in the history of the people being replaced with a history of mistakes by the leadership."

"The sphere of culture is subject to renewal and cleansing as well. This process will go the more quickly, the more deeply and closely intellectuals will become involved in the life of the people and the Party," *Pravda* said.

It stressed the responsibility of the press, noting that there are no forbidden subjects today. "But the appearance of the article 'I Cannot Forgo the Principles' is an attempt, little by little, to revise Party decisions. At meetings at the Party's Central Committee it has been said more than once that the Soviet press is not a private shop and that the communists writing in the press and the editors should be aware of their responsibility for the articles and the publications. In this case the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, which has, let us be straight about it, done much for perestroika, has departed from this principle."

"We need disputes helping to advance perestroika and leading to the consolidation of forces and cohesion around perestroika rather than to disunity," the article stressed.

"Perestroika is a cause for every communist and a patriotic duty for every citizen," *Pravda* said in conclusion. "We can and must revive the Leninist practices of socialist society — the most humane and the fairest one. We shall continue abiding firmly and unwaveringly by the revolutionary principles of perestroika: more glasnost (openness), more democracy, more socialism." □



# Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Gustav Husak

ON April 12 Mikhail Gorbachev met Gustav Husak, Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, staying on an official friendly visit in the Soviet Union.

Greeting cordially the guest, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee said that the Soviet communists and the Soviet people highly appreciate Comrade Husak's huge contribution to the cause of socialism and to the consolidation of friendship and co-operation between the parties and peoples of the USSR and Czechoslovakia.

The exchange of information on the work for perestroika and the democratisation of socialist society conducted in the Soviet Union and in Czechoslovakia was central to the conversation.

"Setting the task of sharply speeding up the country's social and economic development, we at first were placing emphasis mainly on material incentive," Mikhail Gorbachev said. "This has been and remains correct. But it was soon discovered that no less effective a stimulus is the striving of the working people to make decisions, to take an active part in management. Creating the conditions for people's initiative and self-government is precisely the essence of democratisation. To fear this means not to believe in people. And not to believe in people means not to believe in socialism".

"The Party boldly takes the road to the widest and most effective democratisation. This subject will be discussed at the coming 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU. A major and not easy question — clearcut division of functions between Party and state bodies — should be discussed there in a fundamental way.

"It should be decided in such a way that the Party could bring into play its creative potential as the political vanguard of society and the soviets could present themselves as full-fledged representative bodies, in accordance with Lenin's notion of their role. It is also necessary to ensure that the activity of all Party, state and public organisations, officials and citizens be based on a strict observance of legality, that the organic combination of initiative and responsibility be ensured. The creation of the juridical basis for the socialist state should crown the reorganisation of the political system".

Gustav Husak noted that similar problems, with taking into account the specific features of Czechoslovakia, had been actively discussed at the recent plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. It is necessary to develop new forms of Party work, to improve substantially the mechanism of state management, enhance its effectiveness, reduce the central and local apparatus, decrease the number of ministries and revise their tasks and methods of work. All the links of the political system should act with a greater independence and a greater sense of responsibility as is required by the restructuring.

The consensus about the need to deepen co-operation and exchange the experience of the activity of the bodies of people's representation

was expressed. These bodies have considerable opportunities to promote the development of mutually-advantageous economic exchange, the establishment of direct ties between enterprises, of contacts in the sphere of culture and people-to-people contacts.

The participants in the conversation were united in assessing the international situation and the ways of consolidating peace and security.

The Soviet side highly appraised Czechoslovakia's constructive role in ridding Europe of nuclear weapons and in the development of the European process.

Over a number of years Czechoslovakia has been advancing the idea of creating a comprehensive system of international ecological security. This valuable initiative deserves to be supported.

Gustav Husak emphasised that the Soviet Union's vigorous efforts aimed at ending the nuclear arms race and consolidating universal peace and security enjoy the broadest of support in Czechoslovakia. The idea of a common European home — peaceful good-neighbourliness and broad co-operation of all European peoples — is particularly close to the Czechoslovak people.

Mikhail Gorbachev asked that wishes for success be conveyed to Milos Jakes, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, to communists and the entire fraternal Czechoslovak people.

The meeting passed in an atmosphere of cordiality and complete mutual understanding. Present at the meeting were Bohuslav Chnoupek, Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and F. Salda, Chief of the Office of the President of Czechoslovakia. Present from the Soviet side were Vadim Medvedev, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Georgi Shakhnazarov, aide to the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. □

## SHEVARDNADZE ARAFAT MEETING

(Continued from Page 134)

Eduard Shevardnadze informed Yasser Arafat of how the Soviet Union formulates its practical line in the field of solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular in its contact with the United States.

It was noted that the main criterion of evaluating approaches to the settlement and the conference should be the extent to which they facilitate advance to a genuine all-embracing Middle East settlement, a just solution of the Palestinian problem, the extent to which they accord to the principle of ensuring a balance of interests of all the sides drawn into the conflict.

Yasser Arafat stated support for the Soviet Union's approach to a settlement in the Middle East, for its perception of the role and significance of the international conference. He praised the practical actions taken by Soviet diplomacy along this direction.

Eduard Shevardnadze noted that progress towards a Middle East settlement depends largely also on the coordinated actions of the Arabs themselves, their mutual feeling of fellowship. In this connection attention was drawn to the importance of developing understanding and co-operation between all the Arab participants in the conflict.

Other regional problems were also discussed, primarily the Afghan problem. Eduard Shevardnadze outlined the Soviet point of view on this score stressing that imaginative steps by the USSR and the Republic of Afghanistan have brought the Afghan settlement right up to its completion. This is a worthy precedent for the political settlement of other regional conflicts.

Yasser Arafat supported the statement adopted by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev and the President of the Republic of Afghanistan Najibullah in Tashkent on April 7, the political line of the Soviet Union and the steps taken by it in this question. He said that for its part the Palestinian leadership will facilitate to the extent of its possibilities the establishment of peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

The sides spoke with great alarm and concern about the escalation of the Iran-Iraq conflict and the continuation of the "war of the cities". It was their common opinion that the United Nations Organisation has a special role in the efforts to achieve the speediest ending of the Iran-Iraq war. Further steps to implement in full volume resolution 598 of the Security Council, which is the political basis of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, should be worked out within its framework.

In expressing satisfaction with the state of Soviet-Palestinian relations the sides stated their intent to promote their development. It was agreed to continue the practice of political coordination concerning questions of the international situation and the situation in the Middle East, including within the framework of the mechanism of bilateral consultations.

On behalf of the PLO and the entire Palestinian people Yasser Arafat expressed profound gratitude to the people and leadership of the Soviet Union for solidarity with and extensive support for the just struggle of the Palestinians for their inalienable national rights. □

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